	Application No.	Applicant(s)
Notice of Allowability	09/666,086	UKIGAWA ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Oanh L. Duong	2155	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--
All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to _08/19/2004_.

2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are _2-7 and 9-30_.

3. ☒ The drawings filed on _12 January 2001_ are accepted by the Examiner.

4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
    a) ☒ All   b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
      1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
      2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .
      3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the
         International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
    * Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.

6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
    (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
      1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
    (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of
      Paper No./Mail Date _____.
    Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).

7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)
1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _received on 2/2/2004_
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material

5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____ .
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

HOSAIN ALAM
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

Reasons for Allowance

1.   The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The invention as claimed. Claims 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23,

24, 28 and 29 specially include a limitation based on counting the number of

terminal devices/participants which/who have logged into a current chat session

in a chat network system, and outputting voice information to the terminal

devices/ participants in the chat session set at an audible-level/volume in

accordance with the counted result. None of the cited prior art teaches the

invention as claimed and the invention is patentable.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no

later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should

preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled

"Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Interview Summary

2.   Examiner was contacted by the undersigned, Alexander V. Yampolsky

(Registration No. 36,324), on October 19, 2004. The undersigned authorized

examiner to amend claims as set in proposed amendment. In addition, applicants

allows examiner to cooperate some limitations (e.g., count means, sending

means) of claim 2 into claims 5, 7, 14, 28 and 29 and correct any informality in

the claims.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

3.   An extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) is required in order to make

an examiner's amendment which places this application in condition for

allowance. During a telephone conversation conducted on October 18, 2004,

Applicants requested an extension of time for 2 MONTH(S) and authorized the

Director to charge Deposit Account No. 500417 the required fee of $870.00 for

this extension and authorized the following examiner's amendment. Should the

changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be

filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an

amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The title of the invention is changed to: "**A Network System and Method**

for Providing Voice Information to Participants in a Chat Session Set at an

Audible Level Corresponding to the Number of Participants Currently

Logged in the Chat session".

The claims are amended as follow:

2.   (Currently Amended) A <u>chat</u> network system <u>providing chat services to a</u>

<u>plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices, the chat network system</u>

including a server device and terminal devices connected to the sever device via a

network, wherein:

said server device comprises:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information

sent from the terminal devices via the network;

count means for counting in accordance with the predetermined input information

that said input information receiving means receives;

information providing means for providing information in accordance with a

value counted by said count means, wherein the value representing the number of

terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the

predetermined input information;

voice information providing means for providing voice information set at an

audible level in accordance with the value that the counting means counts; and

sending means for sending information that the information providing means

provides, and the voice information that the voice information providing means provides,

via said network to the terminal devices currently logged in the chat session; wherein

said terminal devices comprise:

input means for inputting said predetermined input information;

input information sending means for sending said predetermined input

information input by said input means via the network [.], and controlling the input

information receiving means of said server device to receive the predetermined input

information;

means for receiving information sent from the sending means of the server device

via the network and voice information; and

output means for outputting information and voice information that the receiving

means receives.

3.   (Currently Amended) A chat network system providing chat services to a

plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices, the chat network system

including a server device, and terminal devices connected to the sever device via a

network, wherein said terminal devices connected to said server device are divided into

groups, and

said server device comprises:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information

sent from the terminal devices via the network;

counting means for counting for every group in accordance with the

predetermined input information that said input information receiving means receives;

information providing means for providing information including voice

information set at an audible level in accordance with a counted result for every group as

counted by said counting means, wherein the counted result representing the number of

terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the

predetermined input information;

sending means for sending information that the information providing means

provides, to the terminal devices currently logged in the chat session, via said network;

wherein

said terminal devices comprise:

input means for inputting said predetermined input information;

input information sending means for sending the predetermined input information

input by said input means via the network, and controlling the input information

receiving means of said server device to receive the predetermined input information;

means for receiving information sent from the sending means of the server device

via the network, and voice information; and

output means for outputting information and voice information that the receiving

means receives.

4.   (Currently Amended) A <u>chat</u> network system including a server device and

terminal devices connected to said server device through a network, wherein:

said server device includes a memory for storing a program, a processor for

executing the program, and a first communications device for sending and receiving

information to and from said terminal devices,

the first communications device receiving predetermined input information

sent from said terminal devices through the network,

the processor counting in accordance with the <u>predetermined</u> input

information received by the first communications device,

the processor generating information and voice information <u>set an audible</u>

<u>level</u> corresponding to <u>a</u> [the] counted value, <u>wherein the counted value representing the</u>

<u>number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated</u>

<u>with the predetermined input information;</u> and

said server device sending the generated information and <u>the</u> voice

information to said terminal devices from the first communications device through the

network;

each of said terminal devices

includes a memory for storing a program, a processor for executing the

program, an input device for inputting information, an output device for outputting

information, and a second communications device for sending and receiving <u>information</u>

to and from said server devices,

      inputs the predetermined input information through the input device,

      sends the <u>predetermined</u> input information input from the input device to the

[second] <u>first</u> communications device from the second communications device through

the network,

      the second communications device receiving the information and <u>the</u> voice

information from the <u>first</u> communications device of said server device through the

network, and

      each of said terminal devices outputting the information and <u>the</u> voice

information received by the second communications <u>device</u> from the output device.

     5.   (Currently Amended) An information server system which serves participants

of a <u>chat</u> network service with information through a network, comprising:

accepting means for accepting predetermined information sent from the participants

of the <u>chat</u> network service through the network;

count means for counting in accordance with the predetermined information which

said accepting means has accepted;

information providing means for providing <u>said</u> information including voice

information <u>set at an audible level</u> corresponding to a value counted by said count means

to the participants of the <u>chat</u> network service through the network [.]<u>, wherein the value</u>

<u>representing the number of participants who have logged in to a current chat session</u>

associated with the predetermined input information; and

      sending means for sending said information via said network to the participants

currently logged in the chat session.

      6.   (Currently Amended) A method for serving information, in a chat network

system including a server device and terminal devices connected to each other through a

network, from said server device to said terminal devices, said method comprising:

      an inputting step of inputting predetermined input information from said terminal

devices;

      an input information sending step of sending the predetermined input information

input in said inputting step from said terminal devices to said server device through the

network;

      a counting step of counting according to the predetermined input information which

is sent in said input information sending step and received by said server device;

      an information providing step, as performed by said server device, providing

information corresponding to a value counted in said counting step, wherein the value

representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat

session associated with the predetermined input information;

      a voice information providing step of the server device providing voice information

set at an audible level in accordance with the value counted in the counting step;

      a sending step of sending the information provided in said information providing

step and the voice information provided in said voice information providing step, to said

terminal devices currently logged in the chat session from said server device through the

network; and

an outputting step of outputting from said terminal devices the information and

voice information sent in said sending step and received by said terminal device.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for providing information to participants of a

chat network service through a network, said method including

counting in accordance with predetermined input information sent from the

participants of the chat network service;

providing the participants of the chat network service through the network with said

information including voice information set at an audible level corresponding to a value

counted in accordance with the predetermined input information sent from the

participants of the network service through the network[.], wherein the value representing

the number of participants which have logged in to a current chat session associated with

the predetermined information; and

sending said information via said network to the participants currently logged in the

chat session.

9. (Currently Amended) A server device which is connected to terminal devices

through a network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their

respective terminal devices, comprising:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information

sent from the terminal devices through said network;

counting means for counting in accordance with the predetermined input

information received by the input information receiving means;

information providing means for providing information in accordance with a value

counted by the counting means, wherein the value representing the number of terminal

devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the input

information;

voice providing means for providing voice information at an audible level according

to the value counted by said counting means; and

sending means for sending information provided by the information providing

means and the voice information provided by the voice information providing means to

the terminal device currently logged in the chat session through the network.

11.   (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 9, wherein:

said counting means includes any of (1) means for counting for every group[.] a

number of items of the predetermined input information that the input information

receiving means receives. (2) means for counting a number of log-in people to [the] a

chat network [net work] system at that time[.] for every group, in accordance with the

predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives, or

(3) means for counting up for every group, when said predetermined input information is

an input information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down for every

group, when said input information indicates log-out.

12.   (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 9, wherein:

the predetermined input information is information and voice information, which is

input from said terminal devices, as regards contents of the information provided by said

information providing means; and

said counting means counts in accordance with the <u>predetermined</u> input information

which is received by said input information receiving means at a predetermined interval.

13.   (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 12, wherein:

the predetermined input information includes various types of the contents of the

information and voice information provided by said information providing means; and

said counting means is means for counting for every type of the contents of the

<u>predetermined</u> input information.

14.   (Currently Amended) A server device connected to terminal device through a

network <u>for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective</u>

<u>terminal devices</u>, wherein:

said terminal devices connected to said server device through the network are

divided into groups;

and wherein the server device comprises:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information

sent from the terminal device<u>s</u> through the network;

counting means for counting for every group of terminal devices, in accordance

with <u>the predetermined</u> input information received by input information receiving means;

information providing means for providing said terminal devices with information,

<u>including voice information set at an audible level,</u> which differ from each group of said

terminal <u>devices,</u> in accordance with a counted result for every group as counted by said

counting means[.]<u>, wherein the counted result representing the number of terminal</u>

<u>devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined</u>

<u>input information; and</u>

    <u>sending means for sending said information via said network to the participants</u>

<u>currently logged in the chat session.</u>

15.   (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 14, further

comprising user information registration means for registering information regarding

users of said terminal devices which are connected to said server device through the

network, and

    wherein said terminal devices connected to said server device through the network

are divided into groups in accordance with the information registered by said user

information registration means, and

    said counting means refers to the user information registration means based on <u>the</u>

<u>predetermined</u> input information received by said input information receiving means, and

counts for each group of said terminal devices.

16.   (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 14, wherein said

counting means includes any of (1) means for counting for every group, <u>a</u> number of

items of <u>the predetermined</u> input information that the input information receiving means

receives, (2) means for counting <u>a</u> number of log-in people to [the net work] <u>a chat</u>

<u>network system</u> at that time for every group[.] in accordance with <u>the predetermined</u>

input information that the input information receiving means receives, or (3) means for

counting up for every group, when said <u>predetermined</u> input information is <u>an input</u>

information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down for every group,

when <u>said input</u> information indicates log-out.

17.   (Currently Amended) A server device which can communicate with terminal

devices through a network <u>for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their</u>

<u>respective terminal devices,</u> including a memory for storing a program, a processor for

executing the program, and a communications device for sending and receiving

information to and from said terminal devices, wherein:

said communications device receiving predetermined input information sent from

the terminal devices through the network;

said processor counting in accordance with <u>the predetermined</u> input information

received by the communications device;

said processor generating information including voice information <u>set at an</u>

<u>audible level</u> corresponding to [the counted] <u>a</u> value <u>counted by said processor;</u> and

sending the generated information from the communications [terminal] <u>device</u> to the

terminal devices through the network, wherein <u>the value representing the number of</u>

<u>terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the</u>

<u>predetermined input information.</u>

18.   (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 17, wherein:

the predetermined input information is <u>an input</u> information which is input, in said

terminal devices, as regards contents of the information generated by the processor and

sent from the communications device; and

      the processor counts in accordance with the input information received by the

communications device at a predetermined interval.

      19.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium which records

a program making a computer device, which is connected to terminal devices through a

network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective

terminal devices, function as:

      input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information

sent from said terminal devices through the network;

      counting means for counting in accordance with the predetermined input

information received by said input information receiving means;

      information providing means for providing information in accordance with a value

counted by said counting means, wherein the value representing the number of terminal

devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined

input information;

      voice information providing means for providing voice information set an audible

level in accordance with a value counted by said counting means; and

      sending means for sending the information provided by said information providing

means and the voice information providing means to said terminal devices currently

logged in the chat session through the network.

20. (Currently Amended) A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave and sent through a communications path, said signal making a computer device which is connected to a plurality of terminal devices through a network <u>for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices</u> to function as a computer device connected to terminal devices through a network as:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information sent from said terminal devices through said network;

counting means for counting in accordance with the <u>predetermined</u> input information received by said input information receiving means;

information providing means for providing information in accordance with a value counted by said counting means<u>, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the input information</u>; and

voice information providing means for providing voice information <u>set at an audible level</u> in accordance with a value counted by said counting means; and

sending means for sending the information provided by said information providing means and <u>the</u> voice information providing means to the terminal devices <u>currently logged in the chat session</u> through the network.

21. (Currently Amended) A server device which can communicate with terminal devices through a network <u>for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices</u>, the server device including a memory for storing a program, a processor for executing the program, and a communications device

for sending and receiving information to and from said terminal devices,

the communications device receiving predetermined input information sent from

said terminal devices that are divided into groups beforehand, through the network,

the processor counting for every group, in accordance with the predetermined

input information received by the communications device,

the processor generating for every group, information including voice information

set at an audible level, corresponding to [the counted] a value counted by said processor,

wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a

current chat session associated with the input information, and

said server device sending the generated information to said terminal devices

from the communications device through the network.

22.   (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 21, wherein

said processor includes any of (1) means for counting a number of items of the

predetermined input information that the [first] communications device receives, (2)

means for counting for every group, a number of log-in people to [the net work] a chat

network system at that time, in accordance with the predetermined input information that

the [first] communications device receives, or (3) means for counting up for every group,

when said predetermined input information received by the [fist] communications device

is an input information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down for

every group, when said input information indicates log-out.

23.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium which

records a program wherein the program makes a computer device which is communicatable with terminal devices the network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices to function as:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information sent from said terminal devices, which are divided into groups beforehand, through the network;

counting means for counting for every group, in accordance with the predetermined input information received by said input information receiving means;

information providing means for providing information including voice information set at an audible level in accordance with a value counted by said counting means, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the input information; and

sending means for sending the information provided by said information providing means to said terminal devices currently logged in the chat session through the network.

24.   (Currently Amended) A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave and sent through a communications path, said signal making a computer which is connected to a plurality of terminal devices through a network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices to function as:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information sent from said terminal devices which are divided into groups beforehand, through the network;

counting means for counting for every group, in accordance with the

predetermined input information received by said input information receiving means;

information providing means for providing information including voice

information set at an audible level in accordance with a value counted by said counting

means, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged

in to a current chat session associated with the input information; and

sending means for sending the information provided by said information

providing means to said terminal devices currently logged in the chat session through the

network. .

25.   (Currently Amended) The network system as recited in claim 3, wherein

said counting means includes any of (1) means for counting a number of items of the

predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives for

every group, (2) means for counting for every group, number of log-in people to the [net

work] chat network system at that time, in accordance with the predetermined input

information that the input information receiving means receives, or (3) means for

counting up for every group, when said predetermined input information received by the

input information receiving means is an input information indicating log-in to the server

device, and counting down for every group, when said input information indicates log-

out.

26.   (Currently Amended) The network system as recited in claim 4, wherein

the processor includes any of (1) means for counting a number of items of the

predetermined input information that the first communications device receives, (2) means

for counting for every group, a number of log-in people to [the net work] a chat network

system at that time, in accordance with the predetermined input information that the first

communications device receives, or (3) means for counting up for every group, when said

predetermined input information received by the [fist] first communications device is an

input information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down for every

group, when said input information indicates log-out.

27.   (Current Amended) The information providing system as recited in claim

5, wherein said counting means includes any of (1) means for counting a number of items

of the predetermined input information that the input information receiving means

receives, (2) means for counting a number of log-in people to [the net work] a chat

network system at that time, in accordance with the predetermined input information that

the input information receiving means receives, or (3) means for counting up when said

predetermined input information received by the input information receiving means is an

input information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down when said

input information indicates log-out.

28.   (Currently Amended) An information server system which serves

participants of a chat network service with information through a network, comprising:

accepting means for accepting predetermined information sent from the

participants in a plurality of groups, of the chat network service through the network;

counting means for counting for every group, in accordance with the

predetermined information said accepting means has accepted; and

information providing means for providing information including voice

information set at an audible level for every group, corresponding to a value counted by

said counting means for every group, to the participants of the chat network service

through the network[.], wherein the value representing the number of participants who

have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined information;

and

sending means for sending said information via said network to the participants

currently logged in the chat session for each group.

29.   (Currently Amended) A method for providing information to participants

of a chat network service through a network, said method including

counting in accordance with predetermined input information sent from the

participants of the chat network service through the network;

providing the participants of the chat network service, who are divided into

groups, through the network with information including voice information set at an

audible level corresponding to a value counted for every group, in accordance with

predetermined input information sent from the participants of the chat network service

through the network, wherein the value representing the number of participants who have

logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined input information,

and

sending the provided information to the participants currently logged in the chat

session.

30.   (Currently Amended) The network system as recited in claim 2, wherein

said counting means includes any of (1) means for counting a number of items of the

predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives, (2)

means for counting a number of log-in people to the [net work] chat network system at

that time, in accordance with the predetermined input information that the input

information receiving means receives[.], or (3) means for counting up when said

predetermined input information is an input information indicating log-in to the server

device. and counting down when said input information indicates log-out.

Conclusion

4.   Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Oanh L. Duong whose telephone number is (703) 305-

0295. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday- Friday, 8:00AM - 5:30PM.

        If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Hosain T. Alam can be reached on (703) 308-6662. The fax phone number

for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the

Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for

published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status

information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For

more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you

have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business

Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

O.D
October 22, 2004

HOSAIN ALAM
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER